

Department Overview

The Department of Corrections is an agency dedicated to public safety through the successful management and supervision of offenders on probation, in prison, and on parole. The Department's responsibility is to administer the sentence set by the court - ranging from probation to capital punishment - in ways that promote the longest lasting public safety at the lowest cost to taxpayers. Offenders assigned to the Department are successfully managed by ensuring they are supervised at the correct custody or supervision level. A cadre of more than 11,000 well-trained correctional professionals committed to the vision, mission, values and professional principles of the Department, assesses each offender's criminal history, evaluates community and institutional conduct and enforces compliance with court orders and Department rules. This blend of on-going assessment, custody classification, placement on a continuum of supervision strategies and assignment to basic habilitation interventions are several of the key methods used to promote sober, civil, productive and law-abiding behavior to enhance public safety. As of June 30, 2005, there are currently more than 31,000 adult felons confined in Missouri's 20 correctional facilities and two Community Release Centers. The Department also supervises more than 15,000 parolees and more than 50,000 probationers across the state. In all, the Department is responsible for the care, custody and supervision of approximately 96,000 adult offenders in Missouri.

There are four divisions within the Department. The management of felons and selected misdemeanants committed by the court are divided between the Division of Probation and Parole and the Division of Adult Institutions. The Division of Offender Rehabilitative Services provides program services to felons assigned to probation, parole or prison. All staff related activities and special program services are provided through the Division of Human Services.

The Department utilizes strategic planning to promote continuous improvement and excellent customer service at all levels of the organization. This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that offenders under the supervision of the Department of Corrections are assigned to the correct custody classification and receive those services that reduce criminal behavior and promote the longest lasting public safety through a measurable reduction in recidivism and revocation.

The strength of the Department of Corrections is found in the men and women who serve around the clock to ensure that offenders are supervised at the most appropriate level with the greatest care for public safety. To assist our staff in their challenging work, the Department has developed policies and procedures based on statutes, case law and the best practices in the field.

To ensure that policy and procedure are representative of the needs of staff and adhere to legal obligations, the Department uses task forces and work teams to research different operations in order to review and rewrite policy. This practice allows the Department to not only review its operations, but receive input from those who are required to implement the policies and procedures prior to review and approval by administrators and

the executive staff. Knowing what is expected and the consistent application of the rules makes for secure institutions and safe supervision strategies.

Training is essential to building and maintaining a professional staff. The Department has established a Training Academy with its headquarters in Jefferson City and Regional Training Centers in Farmington, Jefferson City and St. Joseph. A full-time professional training staff works at each center to ensure that training is delivered consistently, accurately and completely across the state. Staff outside the training centers is also enlisted to assist and conduct training in specialized topics. This brings the professional expertise of our working staff to newly hired employee.

Sometimes overlooked are the line staff and supervisors dedicated to providing quality correctional supervision to the offenders. Working together these units of probation and parole officers, correctional officers, cooks, substance abuse counselors, caseworkers, maintenance staff, teachers and others blend into a team that holds offenders accountable for their behavior and responsible for their actions. Through a combination of supervision strategies and classification criteria, offenders are supervised at a level needed to meet public safety concerns while meeting the needs of the offender.

Supervision levels in the community range from intensive supervision to community corrections programs such as electronic monitoring and halfway houses, to minimum. In the prisons there are five custody levels that range from minimum (C-1) to maximum (C-5). Using objective criteria to establish supervision and custody levels ensures offenders of corresponding need and disposition are supervised and confined safely and securely with appropriate programming.

The employees of the Missouri Department of Corrections are among the finest in the field of corrections. They work long hours and hard days to do the best job they can for the people of the State of Missouri. We take our jobs seriously and are committed to making Missouri a safe and secure place for its citizens and visitors.